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ABSTRACT

The three sections of this paper describe separate aspects of the Pre-Service Elementary Education Center at Youngstown State University, which enables elementary education students to participate in on-side experiences in elementary schools, with an emphasis on reading instruction. The first section provides a program overview, noting how the program was originated and how hierarchical and process models, evaluation instruments, and follow-up activities were designed. The second section describes the program, which involves students in instructional sessions on reading theory and competencies, planning sessions with elementary school teachers, individual and group instruction of elementary school pupils, regularly scheduled work in the college reading center, and conferences with instructors. It also discusses the inservice activities held for the elementary school teachers, the hierarchical and process models used, the way in which teacher needs were assessed and competency checklists were developed for student use, and the program implementation. The final section discusses program evaluation, including the overall evaluation strategy, the use of a standardized reading test to assess the program results, and the use of checklists, surveys, log reports, and information about elementary school pupils. It reports that overall results were quite favorable. (GT)

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ELEMENTARY TEACHER EDUCATION CENTER

Paper presented at the Annual
Meeting of the Third Annual
Great Lakes Regional Conference
of the International Reading
Association, October 12-14, 1978

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Section A
Program Overview

The Pre-Service Elementary Education Center (hereafter referred to as PERC) offers Youngstown State University (YSU) students enrolled in elementary education the opportunity to participate in "on-site" experiences in an elementary school setting.

PERC was a response to the guidelines set down by the Ohio State Department of Education Division of Redesign and Renewal which challenges university and public school agencies to develop and cooperatively implement preservice activities prior to the student teaching experience. YSU had developed such field based centers before the state formally recommended such a direction in providing experiences in the practical application of content teaching. This model was the basis for PERC with emphasis on reading instruction.

A joint effort by Canfield Local School administrators and staff and Youngstown State University faculty in the Department of Elementary Education resulted in the development of a differentiated staffing pattern in the elementary school that included the establishment of the preservice education center at the local site.

The project was planned cooperatively by the local project director, administrative assistant, and the department chairperson of the University. The policies governing both the local district and University were reviewed to assure the goals and objectives decided upon would be compatible with the educational philosophies of each institution.

The hierarchical model was designed to schematically describe the roles and responsibilities of each member of the project staff including the superintendent, administrative assistant, building principles,

curriculum council members Right-to-Read coordinator, PERC coordinator from the University staff, University instructional staff and the local instructional staff.

The process model was designed to allow for a working interrelationship between the certified staff and preservice staff in a comprehensive developmental curriculum instructional program. In addition, an intensive program of inservice and ongoing staff development in materials and techniques for reading instruction and individualized instruction was planned to include the study and evaluation of the most efficient and acceptable use of the University students.

Evaluation instruments were included in the form of rating scales, surveys and open-ended questionnaires to continually monitor progress of PERC activities. The results were reviewed by the project director, administrative assistant, University coordinators, University staff, and local staff periodically to revise where necessary and/or always to be cognizant of any concerns.

Follow-up activities were included in the project design to provide for continuation of PERC as a locally funded project at the conclusion of the Federal funding resource.

Section B
Program Description/Process of Implementation

PERC goals were developed to meet the needs of the local instructional staff and the preservice University students. The activities were planned to provide objectives that were facilitated through a program of intensive inservice training and preservice competency requirements which would result in staff development in diagnostic teaching techniques and an awareness of multi-level materials to individualize instruction, as well as a preservice course sequence to prepare potential teachers in reading oriented instructional proficiency.

University students were provided with lists of specific competencies in a comprehensive reading course sequence which included developmental and context reading diagnosis and remediation and reading internship. The competencies were identified by the classroom teachers, reading specialists, and University faculty. On the first day of the academic quarter twenty (20) junior level elementary education majors report directly to the school site. These students are those who wish to seek reading validation on their eventual teaching certificate acquired at graduation. A team of University professors also report to the school for a formal orientation session conducted by local and University personnel. Students are expected to be at the school every day from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

The first two weeks of the PERC component is a period of instructional sessions shared by the University faculty to present theoretical foundations of each course and develop an understanding of the competency requirements as they relate to the theory presented.

Actual planning of lessons is closely monitored by the University faculty and teaching staff. Since each local staff member has been

given the competency list, they are encouraged to request certain language arts and reading lessons be included in their daily program. The teacher-student team meet and plan the activities. A sharing of experiences by the classroom teacher and youthful enthusiasm of students develops a joint respect and professional growth over and over as the multi-level activities are implemented.

Initial activities are one on one lessons to allow students to grow in their abilities to work with specific deficiencies of an individual student and become aware of the importance of understanding a child's growth and development as it relates to academic success. Students learn to apply techniques of self-concept development as they remediate skills. Learning to build lessons upon a strong diagnosis component becomes real and necessary.

As students gain in confidence their competency requirements are expanded to include instruction of small group lessons. Sharing of discussion groups, leading a reading group in skill development and/or reinforcement, and enrichment activities, such as dramatization of a particularly enjoyable reading story, are examples of the variety of experiences the students are meeting each day. Many students team with others to plan and teach a whole class lesson under the direct supervision of the classroom teacher and/or a University faculty member. Often, these larger involvements are an outgrowth of the individual tutoring activities or the small group lessons.

In addition to working with children throughout the building the University student spends eight (8) hours a week in the Reading Center developing competency in remedial reading techniques and diagnostic reading evaluation instrument administration, interpretation, and basis for prescriptive teaching.

Conferences with students after lessons are completed allow University instructors to guide students toward increasingly higher professional level lessons by praising and suggesting improvements for subsequent experiences. Classroom teachers are encouraged, but not required, to share in these conferences. Students appreciate realizing that their sharing of the teacher's responsibilities has indeed added to the children's education.

Inservice activities are included for the local staff concurrently with the PERC quarter. Teachers are actively involved in staff development sessions conducted by University consultants and various educators to become more aware of the available materials and techniques necessary to truly implement diagnostic teaching. The differentiated staffing requires that teachers learn, experiment, evaluate, revise and adapt their traditional instructional patterns to the involvement of the preservice students in a more individualized pattern. Administrators and department heads are closely monitoring the process during each quarter. Inservice sessions are planned to meet teacher needs as reflected in an ongoing program of evaluation using informal grade level meetings, teacher meeting discussions, and more formal analysis of open-ended questionnaires and rating scales distributed periodically during the quarter. The program includes parameters that allow for flexibility of program activities. Lines of communication are open between both local and University staff and administration.

To assure the relationships of those involved is understood, a working developmental hierarchical model was designed. It was developed to schematically describe the roles and responsiblities of each member of the joint project including the superintendent, administrative assistant, building principals, curriculum council members, Right to Read

coordinator (who may be a principal or department head), PERC coordinator from the University staff, University instructional staff, and the local staff. The process model was also developed to aid in the assessment of student need and offering a diagram of the appropriate delivery of services to the children. It is also helpful in a clarification of which roles are pure University students' service roles, which have an administra-component and/or a supervisory component. The differentiated staffing model depends upon all involved to understand each role and clearly relate to their own personal level in the pattern.

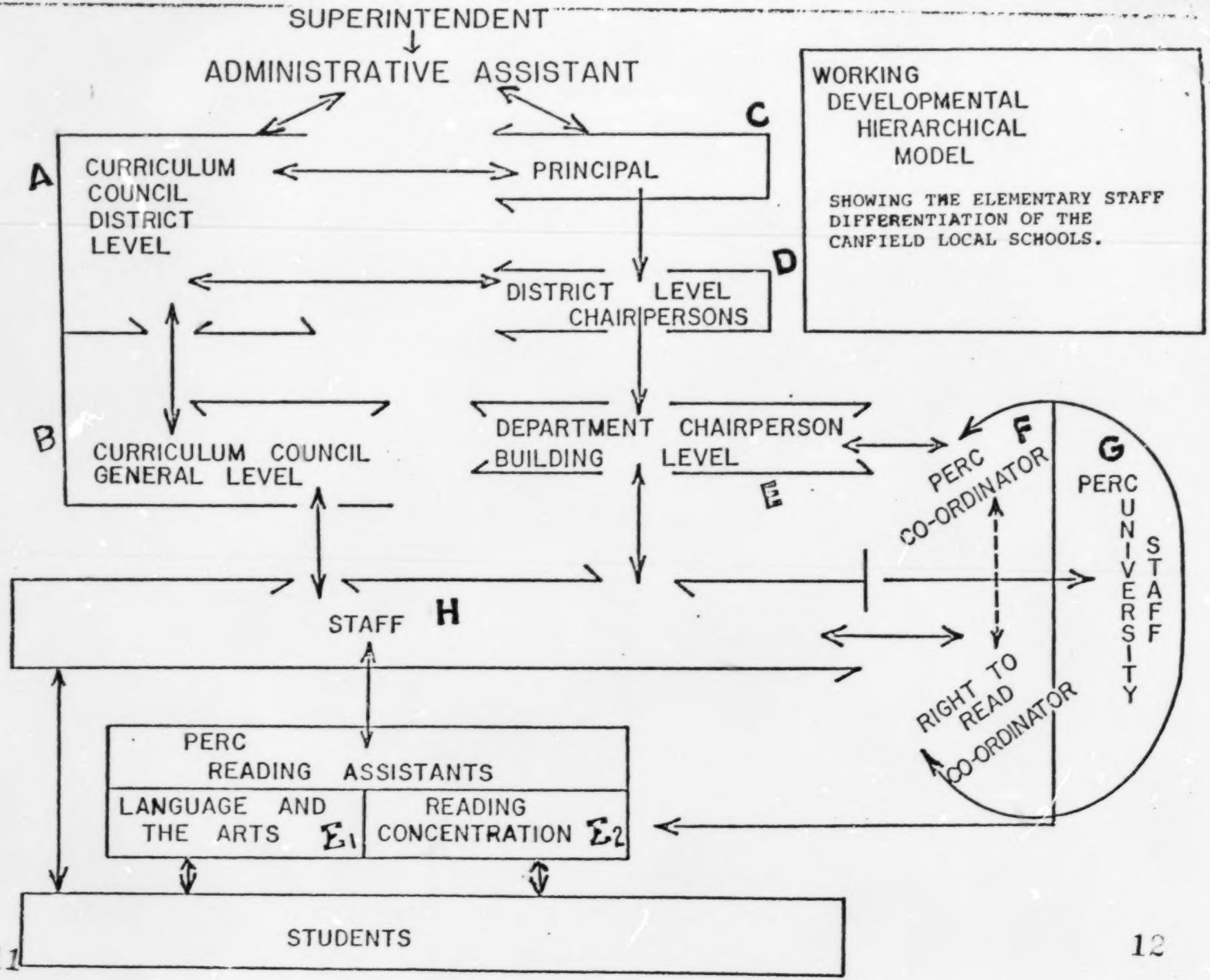
A modified form of the Cruikshank Teacher Problem Checklist was the basis of assessing local teacher needs, concerns, and weaknesses. Since the local district prefers to view its educational problems and designs within a K-12 spectrum, the survey was administered to all teachers in the district. There were five problem statements which appeared as critical. They were: getting students to comprehend, knowing about and having available a full range of reading materials, getting students to follow directions, getting students to work carefully, and having enough time to work with students who need special help.

The course sequence of the University reading program was reviewed as to the relevance of helping preservice students share in experiences to meet the needs they would encounter in schools as well as planning teacher inservice to explain the importance of including students in day to day activities that would partially alleviate these needs, particularly where time and knowledge were concerned. It became

apparent that the competency list could facilitate the inservice and staff development program. Further analysis of the checklist data indicated that the idea of having PERC operational dovetailed into the University's plan for redesign of teacher education coupled with an already strong field based emphasis of YSU's Elementary Education Department.

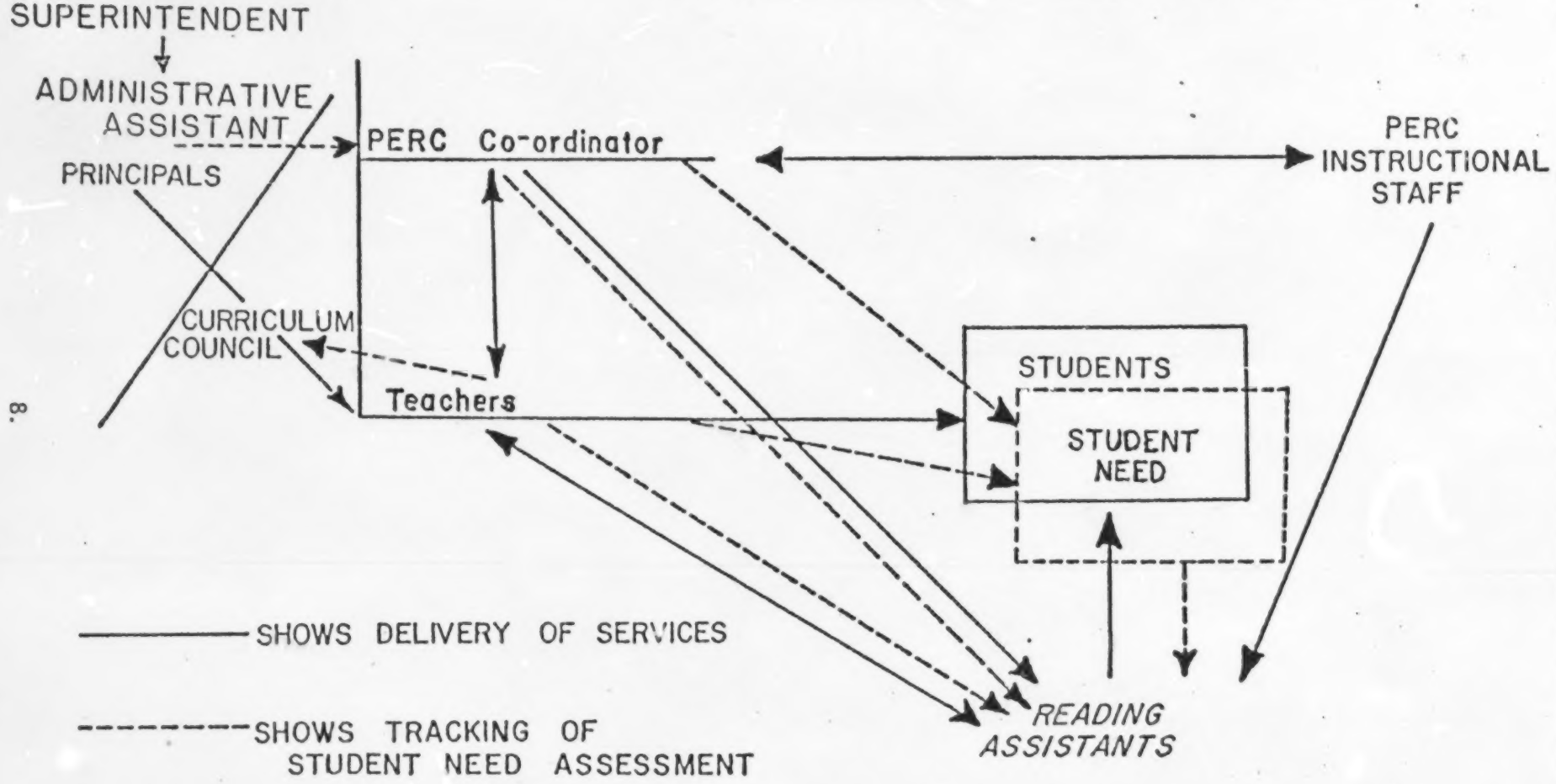
Although the initiation of PERC was a direct result of the award of a Right-to-Read Title VII Reading Improvement Grant to the local district, the program did not require federal funds to implement the preservice component. Funds were used to provide inservice consultant fees, inservice stipends to the local staff and purchase materials for classroom use. To verify the easy replication of a similiar venture in other districts, the Director of the Ohio State Department of Education Right-to-Read Effort invited the Chairman of the Elementary Education Department and the PERC University Coordinator to formally present the project to other educators throughout the State at the 1977 Right-to-Read Renewal Conference in Columbus, Ohio. Interest in the project, as it continues after the funding period, resulted in the University staff accepting an invitation to lead a session titled, "The Development of a Teacher Education Center" at the Fall 1978 Third Great Lakes Conference in Cincinnati, Ohio. Materials from the local project were included in these presentations to alert participants to the cooperative effort necessary for successful implementation of such a problem. The document entitled, PERC Management Kit is available which continues to serve the local district as a guide to assure a working interrelationship exists between the certified staff and preservice staff. It is designed to also assist other districts in planning such a differentiated staffing patterns.

Comments from students such as "I really had to work, but it was worth it", "The teachers were super. I enjoyed working with all of them and learned so much"; and comments from classroom teachers such as, "It is a good practical experience for what they are preparing to do-- teach children", "Their enthusiasm and fresh ideas were very contagious" really tell the success of PERC in an elementary setting.


SUPERINTENDENT
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
A
CURRICULUM COUNCIL DISTRICT LEVEL
C
PRINCIPAL
D
DISTRICT LEVEL CHAIRPERSONS
B
CURRICULUM COUNCIL GENERAL LEVEL
DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSON BUILDING LEVEL
E
F
PERC CO-ORDINATOR
G
PERC UNIVERSITY STAFF
H
STAFF
RIGHT TO READ CO-ORDINATOR
PERC READING ASSISTANTS
LANGUAGE AND THE ARTS E1
READING CONCENTRATION E2
STUDENTS
WORKING DEVELOPMENTAL HIERARCHICAL MODEL
SHOWING THE ELEMENTARY STAFF DIFFERENTIATION OF THE CANFIELD LOCAL SCHOOLS.

PROCESS MODEL

For tracking the assessment of student need and diagraming the delivery of services to students.



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Section C
Program Evaluation

Evaluation instruments were included in the form of rating scales, surveys, and open-ended questionnaires to continually monitor progress of PERC activities. The results were reviewed by the project director, administrative assistant, University coordinators, University staff, and local staff periodically to revise where necessary, and/or always to be cognizant of any concerns.

The development and field testing of PERC was to include an operational model with YSU for University students majoring in reading and was to be consistent with the Teacher Education Redesign Guidelines of the State of Ohio. Activities designed to facilitate this objective were planned to be performed in clearly measurable phases: (1) identification of university-public school parameters for program development, (2) identification of compatible task characteristics for both university and public school programs, (3) development of special university programs for use in public school programs, (4) development and field testing the model, (5) developing and analyzing task shift information, and (6) implementing the field program.

The evaluation strategy and design was developed in a format of evaluation by objective and as to data collection, storage, and use. Such a design proved to be helpful for planning and management purposes.

It should be stressed that the elementary students were the ultimat target audience for all project-related activities including the PERC component. The data from the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Survey Test was used to assess the summative aspect of the entire project. The results at the end of the funding period indicated that the objective to have a minimum of two-thirds of the total elementary student population reading at full potential level was met.

The establishment of PERC and an ongoing evaluation of the success of the objective, was completed by checklists and surveys. The expected product was the design and field testing of the D/S model which included a graphic representation of the model complete with logs and a rating scale and/or questionnaires to assess its successful inclusion in the local organizational plan. A component evaluation team was identified to manage the evaluation information. The team included both local and University personnel.

Log reports indicated that 100 percent of the local staff had some involvement with the preservice students. Specific levels and quality of the involvement were gathered by questionnaires and rating scales periodically during the project. At the end of the first year of the PERC component as a project activity, 79 percent of the teachers responding to a questionnaire as to the overall worthiness of the PERC component reported it was excellent or may need some revision, but was rated very good. Suggestions as to possible revisions were collected and reviewed by the project directors for the following quarters.

A task analysis at the end of the funding period indicated that teachers had restructured the classroom reading curriculum to include greater individualization with accompanying pre and post test learning activity packages and effective use of the preservice students. The use of learning centers was a part of the teaching plan at <u>every</u> grade level, thus indicating that teachers were better able to meet the needs of all students needing special reading help.

With emphasis on diagnostic teaching there was a greater source of information available on the elementary students. Both teachers and YSU students were able to interpret and prescribe from this information.

Of the YSU students responding to a questionnaire at the end of a quarter, 100 percent reported the overall experience was excellent.

Follow-up activities have resulted in reports from principals praising the quality of students having such field based experiences. Of the first year PERC students, all those tho have completed requirements for teaching certification are presently in classrooms and some are involved in special reading instructional programs.